

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

BALD CREEK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Bald Creek, Yancey County, YC0025, Listed 1/29/2009

Nomination by Clay Griffith

Photographs by Clay Griffith, August 2007



Pauline Hensley House



Bald Creek School, façade



General view of historic district



Glenn Proffitt House

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bald Creek Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Both sides of Bald Creek School Road, 76-239 Pleasant Valley Road, not for publication N/A
and 6193-6195 US Hwy 19E

city or town Burnsville vicinity X

state North Carolina code NC county Yancey code 199 zip code 28712

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination/____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ____ nationally ____ statewide X locally. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

____ entered in the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the
National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined not eligible for the
National Register

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

Bald Creek Historic District
Name of Property

Yancey County, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of

(Check only one box)

☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
18	10	buildings
0	0	sites
5	3	structures
0	0	objects
23	13	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
In the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single-family dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding
EDUCATION/school
RECREATION&CULTURE/gymnasium
RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single-family dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
EDUCATION/school
RECREATION&CULTURE/gymnasium
RELIGION/religious facility
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Rustic Revival
Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
Brick
Concrete
roof Asphalt
Metal
walls Wood/weatherboard
Wood/shingle
Wood/plywood
Stone
Stucco
Brick
Synthetics/vinyl
Concrete
Other/concrete block
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Bald Creek Historic District
Name of Property

Yancey County, North Carolina
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made
a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance

Ca. 1900 - 1958

Significant Dates

1938

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, NC

Yancey County Public Library, Burnsville, NC

Bald Creek Historic District
Name of Property

Yancey County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 16.75 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>371740</u>	<u>3975070</u>
	Zone Easting	Northing	
2	<u>17</u>	<u>371730</u>	<u>3974840</u>

3	<u>17</u>	<u>371550</u>	<u>3974820</u>
	Zone Easting	Northing	
4	<u>17</u>	<u>371420</u>	<u>3974940</u>
	<u>X</u> See continuation sheet		

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Clay Griffith

organization Acme Preservation Services, LLC date August 22, 2008

street & number 825-C Merrimon Ave., #345 telephone (828) 281-3852

city or town Asheville state NC zip code 28804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name multiple owners

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Bald Creek Historic District, Yancey County, NC

Section 7. Description

The Bald Creek Historic District encompasses much of the developed Bald Creek community on the south side of US 19 and Bald Creek in western Yancey County. Bald Creek is west of Burnsville, the nearest incorporated town. The historic district centers on a roughly square block formed by Pleasant Valley Road (SR 1134) and Bald Creek School Road (SR 1135) from their northern intersection near Bald Creek United Methodist Church to their second intersection to the south. Pleasant Valley Road continues on to the south beyond this second intersection through undeveloped wooded and agricultural land. At the west end of the central block stands Bald Creek Elementary School, a Rustic Revival-style stone school building constructed in 1938, and its associated gymnasium. Two houses associated with C. W. Burton stand to the west of the school. Several other houses in the district are associated with the Proffitt and Hensley families, who played important roles within the community.

The Bald Creek community is located within the valley formed by Bald Creek as it flows west to east from Ivy Gap (at the present-day Yancey and Madison county line) to its confluence with Cane River, an important Yancey County waterway. Narrow creek valleys extend to the north and south, draining into Bald Creek. The Bald Creek community sits at the foot of a ridge, which rises quickly through densely wooded slopes to the south. By the mid-nineteenth century, a primitive road from Burnsville west to Ivy Gap followed Bald Creek through the valley. Present-day US 19, which roughly follows the old road, was straightened and improved in the second half of the twentieth century. Whereas the old road helped to bring together the community, with important businesses and buildings clustered around its intersection with the Lickskillet and Pleasant Valley roads, the modern highway creates a physically and visually formidable boundary between Bald Creek and the narrow Lickskillet valley to the north. Pleasant Valley Road, which enters Bald Creek on the south side of US 19 opposite Lickskillet Road (SR 1131), rises quickly through the community to a narrow gap before it descends into the Possumtrot community on the south side of the ridge.

The development of Bald Creek began in the 1890s, with the establishment of a private high school that later became the first public high school in the county. The school provided a distinct focal point for the community and attracted educated individuals and families to Bald Creek for whom education was their primary vocation. Set within a predominately rural landscape, the district is an unusual, almost urban concentration of buildings and structures that did not develop in relation to the railroad or the timber and mining industries, which influenced the growth of most other Yancey County communities.

The inventory list for the Bald Creek Historic District is organized geographically, in a roughly clockwise progression from the northwest, beginning with the C. W. Burton House, Burton-Howell House, and other resources located on the north and west sides of Bald Creek School Road. The Burton and Burton-Howell houses are the only two primary resources not located on the loop formed by Bald Creek School and Pleasant Valley roads. The inventory continues with resources located on the east and south sides of the block formed by Bald Creek School and Pleasant Valley Roads, followed by the resources located on the south side of Pleasant Valley Road. No buildings located on the east side of Pleasant Valley Road are included within the district since they are less than fifty years of age.

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The Bald Creek Historic District consists of twenty-three contributing resources, including eighteen buildings and five structures, and thirteen non-contributing resources. With two exceptions—the heavily altered Bald Creek Fire Department building and Sarah Proffitt House—the non-contributing resources are typically associated outbuildings less than fifty years of age. The inventory entries provide the name, location, date(s) of construction, contributing or non-contributing status, and a brief summary of each resource within the district. Each property is named after its first, longest, or best known occupant or function during the period of significance. Construction dates have been determined as accurately as possible by correlating information from deed research, newspaper articles, published sources, and personal communication with long-time residents of the community.

Classification key:	C-B	Contributing building
	C-S	Contributing structure
	NC-B	Non-contributing building
	NC-S	Non-contributing structure

Inventory List

C. W. Burton House, 6195 US Hwy 19E, ca. 1900, ca. 2000.

C-B

The C. W. Burton House stands to the west of Bald Creek Elementary School and is located at the end of a tree-lined gravel drive off US 19. The two-story, three-bay, center-hall plan, frame I-house has been modified over the years. The north-facing house is capped by an asphalt shingle, side-gable roof with two interior brick chimneys rising from the ridge line. Vinyl siding added around 2000 covers original weatherboards. Two-over-two double-hung windows were installed around the same time. An attached, nearly full-width, shed-roof porch is supported on replacement porch posts. The original posts were fashioned in an open geometric pattern from cut lumber and replaced around 2000 with turned posts and balusters and decorative spindle brackets. The single-leaf, glazed-and-paneled entry door remains intact and is fronted by a decorative screen door with spindlework embellishments. Diagonal beaded boards frame the door opening and molded surround, which remain visible by a break in the synthetic siding along the front wall.

A one-story, gable-roof ell extends to the rear and is flanked on either side by shed roof additions. The addition to the west—an extension of the kitchen on the interior—contains a single window on its west wall. The east side addition contains an engaged porch under a broken pitch roof. Located at the southeast corner of the rear ell, the porch is enclosed with screening above frame knee walls. A paired two-over-two horizontal-muntin window is positioned on the rear wall of the ell and illuminates the kitchen. A one-story, gable-roof rear addition at the southeast corner of the house contains a bathroom and was added in the 1950s.

The interior of the house retains many original details and materials. Wide beaded boards cover most of the first-story walls and ceilings, although some rooms also display a narrow, beaded board wainscot. An

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open-string stair with a chamfered newel dominates the center hall and makes a quarter turn to the second-story hall. The plain post-and-lintel design mantels are located in the two main rooms on both stories.

John W. Burton purchased land in Bald Creek as early as 1859, and established a substantial farmstead. Burton, a builder by trade, is thought to have built the E. E. Neil, Sam Byrd, and Edwards-Hensley houses in the Bald Creek valley during the late nineteenth century. He was also active in the organization of the first public high school, serving as chairman of the school committee, and later gave or sold land for the school and Methodist church. C. W. "Wash" Burton, son of John and Sophronia Burton, moved into the house around the turn of the twentieth century. It is unclear whether the house existed at the time or was built for C. W. Burton. Robert Cecil Burton, son of C. W. and Myra Burton, married Ida Mae Proffitt and moved into the house in 1904. Robert and Ida Mae Burton raised five children here—four daughters and a son. Harold Burton, their only son, acquired the property around 1950 and sold the agricultural land (approximately forty acres) west of the house in the early 1960s. Following Harold's death, the house has remained in the Burton family: first, Mary Burton Severs, Harold's sister, who retained a life estate in the property until her death in the 1990s, and currently, Danah Burton Tipton, daughter of Harold Burton.

Garage, C. W. Burton House, ca. 1940.

C-B

A two-story, two-bay detached garage built around 1940 stands to the east of the Burton House. Built into a slope and resting on a rock foundation, the garage bays are located in the lower story of the building, with a frame apartment located above. The garage features an asphalt-shingle hip roof, German siding, four-over-one Craftsman windows, and exposed rafter ends. An interior stone flue and an exterior concrete block flue rise along the west wall of the building. The garage bays are entered on the north side through double-leaf wood doors with four-light fixed windows. The second-story apartment is entered at grade on the south side of the building. A full-width, flat-roof addition was built onto the front of the apartment by Harold Burton in the 1950s. The addition rests on a concrete block foundation with wood deck projecting across the front. A single-leaf, three-light-and-three-panel entry door is reached by a single concrete step on the deck. Paired four-over-one Craftsman windows light the interior from the south and west sides.

Built in the 1940s, the garage apartment was rented to Horace Higgins and his wife for a number of years while Mr. Higgins was principal of the Bald Creek School. Harold Burton added the room onto the front of the apartment for his family. The garage and apartment are currently vacant.

Barn, C. W. Burton House, ca. 1920.

C-B

A two-story, gambrel-roof, frame barn stands to the rear (south) of the Burton House and may have been enlarged from an earlier structure still visible at the rear. The barn is sheathed with German siding on the north, east, and west elevations, but unfinished boards cover the south wall. The roof is covered with corrugated metal sheathing and features exposed rafter ends. The front elevation of the barn is punctuated by three doors on the first story, two three-over-one double-hung windows on the second story, and a rectangular louvered vent in the gambrel end. A single-leaf glazed-and-paneled door, with four lights over

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two horizontal panels, is positioned to the west of center and opens into the main storage area of the barn. A single-leaf six-panel door is positioned to the east of center. A smaller single-leaf, six-panel door at the northeast corner opens into a cold storage room constructed of poured concrete. Two square, four-light windows punctuate the east elevation. A set of exterior wooden steps rises from the southeast corner against the rear wall to a single-leaf door into the upper story of the barn.

Spring House, C. W. Burton House, ca. 1940.

C-S

Standing to the east of the garage and set into the hillside, the spring house is a small, one-story, one-room, gable-roof, frame structure built on a concrete foundation and knee walls. The structure is sheathed with weatherboards and features flat corner boards; exposed ridge pole, headers, and rafter ends; and an asphalt shingle roof. An off-center, single-leaf, six-panel door on the north elevation provides access to the interior, which is illuminated by square windows on the side elevations. The window and door surrounds are formed by flat boards.

Burton-Howell House, 6193 US Hwy 19E, ca. 1930.

C-B

The Burton-Howell House is a one-and-one-half story Craftsman-influenced house located between the C. W. Burton House and Bald Creek School. Set back on a deep lot, the frame dwelling rests on a concrete foundation and features weatherboard siding, an asphalt-shingle hip roof, center hip-roof dormer with a pair of four-light fixed windows, exposed rafter ends, and three interior brick chimneys. An engaged wraparound porch supported by turned wood posts on stone piers dominates the façade and is reached by concrete steps. The porch sits on a stone foundation wall with stone piers topped by square concrete caps. The single-leaf front entry contains four vertical lights over panels. Windows throughout are four-over-one Craftsman-style windows that appear as singles or in groups of two or three. The west end of the porch appears to have been extended and enclosed in the 1950s or 1960s and features a large picture window, with a center plate-glass window flanked by three-over-one double-hung sash on the north elevation. A concrete patio surrounds the enclosed porch extension on the north and west sides, and a single-leaf entry is located at the west end of the extension. A secondary entrance to the house is located on the west elevation (to the south of the porch extension) with a gabled canopy roof sheltering the distance between the house and the adjacent garage.

The Burton-Howell House was built by C. W. Burton after he married for the second time. It is currently owned and occupied by his granddaughter, Faye Howell.

Garage, Burton-Howell House, ca. 1960.

NC-B

A one-story, two-bay, concrete block garage was constructed to the west of the Burton-Howell House and connected to the house by an open breezeway. Built on a concrete slab foundation, the garage features an asphalt-shingle side-gable roof, exposed rafter ends, and wooden roll-up garage doors with a single row of single-pane windows. A change of roof pitch near the front of the building creates a slight projection of the north eave over the garage bay entrances. A squat, square cupola with a pyramidal roof and louvered vents

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adorns the roof ridge. The side elevations contain horizontal, metal-frame windows and German siding in the gable ends.

Bald Creek Elementary School, 100 Bald Creek School Road, 1938, ca. 1950, 1990s, 2000. C-B

Built in 1938 with assistance from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Bald Creek Elementary School is a native stone Rustic Revival-style building, and one of five schools built by the WPA in Yancey County. The E-shaped Bald Creek Elementary School features a long symmetrical façade oriented north with three projecting entrance pavilions—a main center pavilion and two end pavilions—connected by twelve-bay blocks. Each pavilion is topped with a stone parapet wall, and the entrances are recessed within a segmental arch opening. The center pavilion features a wide arched opening with two sets of replacement double-leaf metal doors flanking a single one-over-one double-hung window. The narrow arched openings of the end pavilions are off-center with two single windows positioned to the side. Concrete steps with solid, stone-faced balustrades and concrete caps provide access to each entrance. The two rear end wings are fifteen bays long and an auditorium originally comprised the center arm of the “E.” The deteriorated auditorium wing was removed in the 1990s and replaced with a new kindergarten wing in 2000. The new L-shaped wing is divided by an entrance hallway leading into the school, is topped by an asphalt-shingle hip roof, and is constructed with textured concrete block and concrete block trim of a lighter color. An end-gable, concrete block kitchen and lunchroom were added onto the rear of the west wing in the 1950s. An additional L-shaped block of classrooms, also constructed with concrete block, was built onto the rear of the east wing in the 1990s. Original six-over-six windows were replaced with one-over-one sash in the 1990s. The building is topped by an asphalt shingle roof with exposed rafter ends along the sides of the east and west wings.

On the interior, the school retains its double-loaded central corridor plan and thick plaster walls. Segmental arch openings are positioned at the ends of the main block hallway and at the entrance vestibule. The gold and cream linoleum floor tiles are laid in a checkerboard pattern throughout the hallways. Single-leaf interior wood doors are topped by transoms and feature flat board surrounds.

Gymnasium, Bald Creek Elementary School, 1938. C-B

The freestanding gymnasium, located to the northeast of the school, is a tall, one-story, rectangular structure constructed of concrete and faced with local stone. The front-gabled building is capped by a standing-seam metal roof and has two double-leaf entrances located on the east elevation. The metal doors are topped by flat arch openings and accessed by stone steps. Two pairs of square, four-light windows are positioned above the entrance doors. On the north and south side elevation, groupings of four-light windows are located at a level high above the interior gym floor. A small one-story, shed-roof, concrete vestibule, with metal roofing, exposed rafter ends, paired two-over-two windows, and a single-leaf door in its east end, projects from the center of the south elevation. A one-story, shed-roof block faced with stone projects from the west elevation and contains a single-leaf meal entrance door and square window on the south wall. Other window openings on the west wall appear to have been filled with stone. Two tall stone flues rise above the

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building's roof at the southeast and northwest corners. On the interior, the wood gym floor and plaster walls are intact.

Shed, Bald Creek Elementary School, ca. 1980.

NC-B

A one-story, frame storage shed is located immediately east of the Bald Creek school gymnasium. Built on a concrete slab foundation and sheathed with plywood siding, the building features an asphalt shingle side-gable roof and a central metal roll-up door on the south side.

Pump House, Bald Creek Elementary School, ca. 1940.

C-S

A one-story, one-room, concrete block pump house stands at the southeast corner of a gravel parking lot to the east of the school. Built on a concrete slab foundation, the structure features an asphalt-shingle front-gable roof, exposed rafter end, plywood siding in the gable ends, and a single-leaf wood door with strap hinges. A single two-light window rests on a wood sill in the rear (south) wall of the structure.

Equipment Shed, Bald Creek Elementary School, ca. 1970.

NC-B

A one-story, one-room, side-gable frame and masonry equipment shed stands to the southwest of the school. The structure features a concrete slab floor, concrete block knee walls topped by wood frame construction and modern plywood siding, an asphalt shingle-covered roof, and a single-leaf metal door with a wire reinforced glass window.

Bald Creek Fire Department, 52 Bald Creek School Road, ca. 1940.

NC-B

Now used as a single-family dwelling, this two-story, front-gable, frame building with a one-story wraparound porch and enclosed garage bay was erected for the Bald Creek Fire Department around 1940. The building has been heavily altered with the addition of vinyl siding and replacement materials. The one-story, hip roof, screened porch dominates the asymmetrical façade (south). The single-leaf, glazed-and-paneled entry door appears to be original, but it is flanked by various sizes of replacement windows, including a large pair of multi-light sash at the southeast corner. The one-story porch roof continues around to the west elevation of the house and shelters an enclosed garage with a recessed entrance and a roll-up door. The upper section of the façade contains single and paired replacement windows, decorative shutters, and a square vent in the gable end. A straight run of wood steps lead to the flat-roof of a one-story, frame addition on the east elevation. The projecting bay contains a modern single-leaf door and roll-up metal door on the east side, while the rooftop deck serves sliding-glass doors on the second story. A concrete block chimney flue rises against the east side of the house in the interior corner formed by the addition. A one-story, shed roof addition and shed roof, metal canopy were added on the rear around 2000. The whole house is topped by an asphalt shingle roof.

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Garage, Bald Creek Fire Department, ca. 1960.

NC-B

A one-story, one-bay, frame garage with an attached side shed stands to the northeast of the old Bald Creek Fire Department building. The garage is topped by an asphalt shingle front-gable roof and sheathed with vinyl siding. The garage bay contains a wooden roll-up door. A single-leaf glazed-and-paneled door, with three lights over three horizontal panels, is located on the west side, providing access between the garage and the shed. The attached shed projects from the west side of the garage and is open at the south end, with blind walls on west and north sides.

Shed, Bald Creek Fire Department, ca. 2000.

NC-B

A front-gable, frame shed stands at the northeast corner of the yard surrounding the old Bald Creek Fire Department building. Facing southwest, the diminutive building is sheathed with plywood siding and is covered by metal roof. A single-leaf, wood-frame screen door is located on the southwest side and provides access to the interior, which appears to be used for storage. Two small windows are located on the sides.

Bald Creek United Methodist Church, NW corner of Pleasant Valley Road and Bald Creek School Road, 1951-1955, ca. 1978.

C-B

Situated at the northwest corner of Pleasant Valley Road and Bald Creek School Road, on the south side of Bald Creek, the Bald Creek United Methodist Church is a plain, stucco-covered, front gable masonry building. Its full basement has exterior access from the west end of the building. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles, and the exterior walls are covered with a thin coat of stucco painted white. Solid double-leaf entrance doors at the east end are sheltered by a tetrastyle pedimented portico and accessed by concrete steps at the front and a later metal handicap ramp that runs along the south side of the building before connecting with the portico. A multi-light transom surmounts the entrance doors, which are flanked by single six-over-six replacement windows. A metal conical steeple rises from a two-stage frame base above the east gable end. The gable ends, steeple base, pediment, and entablature are covered with synthetic siding, which was likely added around 1978, along with other repairs made following a severe flood in November 1977.

The seven-bay side elevations contain large, sixteen-over-sixteen, double-hung, replacement windows in the five center bays, with smaller six-over-six windows located at the east and west ends, lighting small rooms off the entrance vestibule and behind the chancel. The west end bay on the south elevation contains a solid wood single-leaf door accessed by wooden steps and sheltered by a metal awning. A horizontal two-light window is positioned at each bay just above ground level and provides light to the basement. The unadorned rear (west) elevation features centrally located double-leaf glazed doors entering the basement. The doors are sheltered by a metal awning and flanked by single window openings—the south opening contains a six-over-six window and the north opening is blind. Two single six-over-six windows are located on the main story directly above the lower story openings. Gravel parking surrounds the building on the west and north sides.

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The Bald Creek United Methodist Church organized in 1882 with Wilson Hensley, W. P. Hensley, H. A. Proffitt, W. W. Proffitt, and Thomas E. Ray named as the first trustees. John W. and Sophronia Burton deeded a parcel of land to the trustees, and a church was built that same year under the supervision of the pastor, Rev. J. Frank Wampler. The church building was remodeled in 1913, adding a pulpit and two rooms to the existing structure. In 1951, the congregation decided to replace the building and construction on the present structure began in August 1951. The new building, measuring thirty-six feet by eighty feet, contained the sanctuary, choir room, pastor's study, and ladies parlor on the main story and was equipped with classrooms, restrooms, kitchen, work room, furnace room, and recreation hall in the basement. A \$5,000 grant from the Duke Endowment provided for building materials and skilled labor, and the remaining labor and materials were supplied by the congregation and members of the community. Families and individuals donated all the furniture in the sanctuary as memorials. The dedication service was held on September 4, 1955.

Picnic Shelter, Bald Creek United Methodist Church, ca. 1980.

NC-S

A gable-roof picnic shelter stands in a flat, grassy area to the west of the Bald Creek United Methodist Church. The gable-roof structure shelters a concrete slab pad and is supported by round metal columns, with three columns spaced across the north and south sides and four columns spaced along the east and west sides. The roof structure is covered with standing seam metal roofing and sheathed with synthetic siding on the gable ends and soffits.

Wilson House, 51 Bald Creek School Road, ca. 1930, ca. 2000.

C-B

Built for James Wilson, a merchant, the one-story, front-gable, frame bungalow has been altered with the addition of vinyl siding and replacement materials around 2000, but retains its overall form. A projecting gable-roof rear bay at the southwest corner appears to be part of the original form, but the windowless shed addition at the southeast corner appears to be later construction. The house rests on a concrete block foundation and is topped by an asphalt shingle roof. An attached, front-gable porch spans the full width of the façade on the north-facing house. The porch is supported by six, turned, replacement wood posts. The house is sheathed with vinyl siding and features single and paired one-over-one replacement windows throughout. A concrete block chimney flue rises against the east side of the house near a freestanding fuel oil tank.

Carport, Wilson House, ca. 1990.

NC-S

A one-story, two-bay, shed-roof, frame carport structure is located close to Bald Creek School Road to the northwest of the Wilson House. The carport is constructed with braced wood posts supporting the shed roof. Rough cut wood siding was added on the east, west, and south sides in the late 1990s.

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Shed, Wilson House, ca. 2000.

NC-B

A freestanding, one-story, gable-roof, prefabricated metal shed is located to the west of the house. The windowless structure is accessed through double-leaf doors on the north side.

Parsonage, 29 Bald Creek Road, 1956.

C-B

A one-story, hip-roof, brick Ranch style house serves as the parsonage for the Bald Creek United Methodist Church, which stands to the north on the opposite side of Bald Creek School Road. Reportedly a prefabricated structure, the north-facing house displays brick veneer siding and an asphalt shingle hip roof. The windows are one-over-one, double-hung, horizontal sash with the exception of a group of three tall one-over-one windows on the façade. An attached, partial-width, shed-roof porch is supported by wood posts and surrounded by a modern wood rail with closely-spaced square balusters. The porch shelters a single-leaf solid wood entry door. A narrow connector links the main block of the house with a one-story, hip-roof, two-bay garage to the west. A second entrance, also a single-leaf door, is located in the connector and is approached by concrete steps with brick side walls and iron hand rails. The garage is accessed by wood roll-up doors with a single row of single-pane windows. A solid, square cupola with a pyramidal roof sits at the peak of the garage roof. Mrs. Sarah Proffitt, a long time resident of Bald Creek, remembers when the house was erected in 1956. She recalls seeing the workers gather to begin construction one day after breakfast and by midday the four wall panels had been raised and secured.¹

Willard Hensley House, 76 Pleasant Valley Road, ca. 1900, ca. 1925.

C-B

The Willard Hensley House sits in the shade of a large sugar maple tree on the west side of Pleasant Valley Road and appears to consist of several pieces put together over time. The initial appearance of the house is of a small one-story side-gable frame dwelling with paired two-over-two windows, Craftsman-influenced attached shed roof porch, and shed dormer. A large rear ell with a tall gable roof, asbestos shingle siding, concrete block foundation, and two-over-two windows may have been added or may be the original house to which the front block was added. A partially enclosed breezeway extends to the west and connects to a separate storage room. The overall form of the center section—with its metal roofing, central interior brick chimney, attached partial-width shed-roof porch on the south side, and enclosed shed on the north side—probably dates to the turn of the twentieth century and suggests that this is the oldest section of the house.

Resting on a stone foundation, the front section of the house is a single-pile, hall-parlor plan dwelling with an exterior brick end chimney on the north side and exposed rafter ends. It is covered by weatherboards and an asphalt shingle roof, but wood shingles sheath the gable ends and the front shed dormer, which contains a band of four two-light windows. The rear of the roof rises to form a tall hip where it adjoins the

¹ Sarah Proffitt, personal communication, July 23, 2007.

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gable end of the center section, further suggesting that the front section was added onto the older building (rather than the older structure being moved to the site and added as an ell to the front block).

The breezeway extending to the west of the center section features a weatherboard knee wall with slender posts supporting the gable roof and center openings on both the north and south sides. The breezeway connects to a single, windowless, frame room covered with board-and-batten siding. Most likely used for storage, the room may have served as a pantry.

Shed, Willard Hensley House, second quarter twentieth century.

C-S

A one-story, gable-roof, frame shed covered with plank siding is located southeast of the house and adjacent to Pleasant Valley Road. The west-facing shed features braced timber post construction and an asphalt shingle roof. The deteriorated building leans considerably to the north.

Barn, Willard Hensley House, second quarter twentieth century.

C-S

A two-part, two-story, gable-roof, frame barn stands at a sharp bend in Pleasant Valley Road to the south of the Willard Hensley House. The structure consists of two sections that appear to have been built at different times, with the east section being the older part and the west section added later. The east section of the barn features a standing-seam metal roof, wood plank siding, timber post framing, and a center east-west passage with small animal stalls on the lower level. The upper level is reached from the road through an opening on the south elevation by a short wood ladder. It is open for storage with a wood floor. A hinged wood plank door lays flat against the south wall, and the main opening is flanked on the east by a square opening cut in the wall to illuminate the interior of the upper level. Another square opening is cut in the north wall to light the interior.

The west section of the barn is slightly smaller in size and built flush against the west wall of the east section. It is sheathed with wood plank siding and covered by an asphalt-shingle gable roof with exposed rafter ends. Two plain openings on the south side and one on the north side provide access to the lower level of the barn, which is open to the center passage of the east section on the interior. The west section of the barn, as well as the full length of the north elevation, is overgrown with vegetation.

Proffitt House, 144 Pleasant Valley Road, ca. 1925.

C-B

The one-story, side-gable, Craftsman-influenced frame dwelling sits on a full basement that is exposed by the sloping site on the north side of Pleasant Valley Road. Weatherboards sheath the first story of the house, but wood shingles cover the basement walls and gable ends. The house is topped by an asphalt-shingle roof, with an interior brick chimney projecting at the ridge, and features exposed purlin and rafter ends. The projecting front-gable porch shelters the center bay and is supported by tapering wood posts on stone piers. A single-leaf entry door is flanked by single two-over-two double-hung windows, with paired two-over-two windows flanking the center bay of the façade. On the sides and rear, the windows are typically two-over-two and appear in groups of two, three, or four, with some replacement one-over-one sash present, particularly at the basement level. A one-bay, two-story, gable-roof pavilion projects from the

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northwest corner at the rear. The pavilion features triple Craftsman windows on the exterior walls of the first story and contains a glazed-and-paneled single-leaf door that provides access to the basement. The two walls of the basement level of the pavilion are covered with asbestos shingle siding along with a one-story shed-roof addition on the northeast side of the pavilion. A wood deck with steps leading down from the front of the house was added to the west and north sides in 2006.

Shed, Proffitt House, ca. 1925, ca. 1995.

NC-B

A one-story, gable-roof shed set into the hillside stands to the east of the Proffitt House. The shed was originally constructed with a second-story, one-bay garage accessed from the road. A previous owner removed the garage section in the 1990s for its chestnut wood framing. Capped by a metal roof with exposed rafter ends and metal roofing material covering the gable ends, the concrete-block-wall shed is accessed on the lower level from the north side. A center, wood-frame wall with plank siding divides the interior into two smaller spaces, which are open to the exterior.

Fleet Proffitt House, 162 Pleasant Valley Road, ca. 1925, ca. 1940.

C-B

The Fleet Proffitt House is a one-story, side-gable, Craftsman-influenced frame dwelling with a full basement reportedly moved to this location from its original site across the road around 1940.² The house, which originally sat on an elevated site, rests on a tall stone masonry foundation that is exposed on the east and west sides and rear (north) of the building. The house is sheathed with German siding, is covered by an asphalt-shingle roof, and displays exposed rafter ends. A brick exterior chimney rises against the west end wall and a second brick flue projects above the ridgeline of the roof on the east side of the house. An attached, partial-width gable-roof porch projects from the south side of the house, with tapered wood posts on square stone bases supporting the corners. The sides of the porch contain simple wooden rails with square balusters. The single-leaf glazed entry door is flanked on either side by a pair of three-over-one Craftsman windows; the porch shelters the entrance and windows on the west side of the facade. Windows throughout the house are a three-over-one and four-over-one Craftsman sash. A two-story gabled pavilion projects from the west side with paired three-over-one windows illuminating the rooms within. A one-story, shed-roof rear entry porch with square wood posts and simple rail was built in 2006 at the northwest corner of the house. The single-leaf rear entry door is composed of three lights over three panels. A single-leaf basement door on the east side features two lights over three panels.

Rug House, 170 Bald Creek School Road. 1946; 1949-51; 1955.

C-B

Glenn Proffitt built the Rug House in 1946 to store rugs and chenille bedspreads for sale through his business in Bald Creek. The original one-story, gable-roof, frame, rectangular building was built over a full basement, which is exposed by the sloping site, but the structure was enlarged and converted to a residence

² Sarah Proffitt, personal communication, July 23, 2007.

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around 1950. Although originally used to store rugs, the Rug House was residential in scale, massing, and finish, consisting of a single open room on the main level and two garage bays in the basement. The first additions included installing interior partitions for two bedrooms, a bathroom, and kitchen. A living room addition and rear porch (added to the east side of the original block) were also built as part of the conversion to a single-family residence. Around 1955, the house was enlarged again with the addition of a bedroom at the east end of the front block and a two-story, shed-roof block located in the interior angle of the "L" at the rear.

The present appearance of the building is characterized by the long façade, sheltered by an attached, shed-roof porch supported on iron posts. The concrete slab porch floor rests on a stone foundation. A large nine-light picture window dominates the façade and is positioned on the east side of a single-leaf entry door. The house is capped by an asphalt-shingle roof with exposed rafter ends, and the main story is sheathed with asbestos shingle siding. German siding covers the east gable end. A combination of original three-over-one Craftsman windows appearing in singles or pairs and two-over-two sash with horizontal muntins light the interior. Most of the original windows are located on the north, south, and west walls of the house, with several windows from the original east elevation salvaged and reused on the addition. The concrete foundation walls are exposed on the east and west sides and at the rear (north). A single, square, four-light, metal frame window with a brick sill is located on the east wall of the foundation. A stone retaining wall bordering Bald Creek School Road turns onto the property on the south side of the driveway and connects to the house at its southwest corner. A single garage bay beneath the house is located on the west side of the foundation and accessed through a wood roll-up door. The second garage bay was covered when the house became a residence. A glazed-and-paneled single-leaf door on the east wall of the rear block provides access to the basement, and a set of wood steps rising against the north wall of the rear block leads from a concrete patio to a glazed-and-paneled single-leaf door at the rear of the first story. An exterior concrete block flue rises against the rear wall of the house at the northeast corner.

The original building was probably no longer needed to store rugs after Proffitt's store burned in 1948. A new brick store building (no longer standing) was completed in 1950. It seems likely that the rugs were moved into a portion of the new building, which would explain why the storage building was vacated and converted to a residence so soon after initial construction.

Sarah Proffitt House, 125 Bald Creek School Road, ca. 1925.

NC-B

The Sarah Proffitt House appears to have been built as a one-story front-gable bungalow, but has been significantly altered over time. An engaged, full-width front porch appears to have been enclosed for additional interior space. Resting on a stone foundation, the house is sheathed with vinyl siding and covered by an asphalt shingle roof. Triangular purlin brackets are located in the gable ends. Windows throughout are one-over-one replacement sash. A concrete slab patio on a stone foundation provides access to the single-leaf entry door. A partially enclosed, shed-roof, wraparound porch on the south and east sides also appears to have been added to the original house, but the one-story gable-roof ell at the northeast corner likely dates to the original construction of the house. The porch is open (although partially shielded by wood screening) at

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the southeast corner and extends onto a rear wood deck. A brick slab chimney dating from the 1970s rises against the east wall of the enclosed porch, and an exterior brick chimney flue is located at the rear of the ell.

Garage, Sarah Proffitt House, ca. 1960.

NC-B

A one-and-one-half story, side-gable, concrete block garage and shed located to the southeast of the house at the end of an unpaved driveway. The building contains one garage bay at the south end, which is accessed by a wood roll-up door, and a storage room at the north end entered through a wide, single-leaf wood door with metal strap hinges. The roof is covered with standing seam metal roofing. Two- and four-light metal frame windows are located on the side and rear elevations. The gable ends are covered with German siding, with a single three-over-one Craftsman window located at the center.

Glenn Proffitt House, 144 Bald Creek School Road, ca. 1920.

C-B

The Glenn Proffitt House is an imposing, two-story, gambrel-roof, frame house located directly behind the Bald Creek School at the intersection of Bald Creek School and Pleasant Valley roads. Incorporating both Colonial Revival and Craftsman elements, the house is covered with weatherboards on the first story and shingles on the gambrel ends, including the front-facing cross gable. Two interior brick end chimneys project from the front slope of the roof and two other interior brick chimneys project from the rear slope. An engaged, full-width, shed-roof porch extends across the façade and is supported on square wood posts with a solid porch rail covered with wood shingles. The single-leaf glazed replacement entry door is flanked by paired six-over-six double-hung windows. A similar pair of windows is located in the front cross-gable under a square louvered vent. Windows on the first-story side elevations are single and paired six-over-six sash. The second-story side-gable ends feature paired six-over-six windows flanked by square six-light windows and a central louvered vent. A one-story, gable-roof ell extends to the rear, with a shed-roof addition constructed of stone projecting from the south side of the ell. A one-story sunroom projects from the rear of the ell and is illuminated by a continuous band of three-over-one Craftsman windows on the three exterior walls. The house rests on a stone foundation and is capped by an asphalt shingle roof.

Glenn Proffitt was an important local businessman who operated several enterprises in the Bald Creek community in the early and mid-twentieth century. Although he is most closely associated with the general store he ran at the intersection of the highway and Lickskillet Road, Proffitt also dealt in the production of eggs and poultry, textiles, rugs, and herbs. He was also the patriarch of the many Proffitts who remained and built houses in Bald Creek. According to one source, Glenn Proffitt originally built his house as one-story structure before adding the second story at a later time.

Garage, Glenn Proffitt House, ca. 1925.

C-B

A detached, one-story, one-bay, front-gable roof garage constructed of stone stands to the southeast of the house within a road bank at the intersection of Bald Creek School and Pleasant Valley roads. The

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garage features German siding in the gable ends, exposed rafter ends, and a standing-seam metal roof. The single garage bay is accessed by a large wood roll-up door.

Egg House, Glenn Proffitt House, ca. 1940.

C-B

A one-story multi-part concrete block shop building stands to the south of the garage and was built for the production, sorting, and packaging of eggs. The building is topped by a metal gable roof and illuminated by metal-frame industrial sash windows.

Well House, Glenn Proffitt House, ca. 1940

C-S

A small, gable-roof, concrete-block well house stands in a grassy area a short distance south of the Glenn Proffitt House. The open, front-gable roof structure displays exposed rafter ends and is covered with standing seam metal. A rectangular opening to the interior is accessed by a plywood door.

Proffitt House, 239 Pleasant Valley Road, ca. 1940.

C-B

Located on a hillside site overlooking the Bald Creek community, the one-and-one-half story, side-gable, frame Minimal Traditional-style house was erected around 1940 for a daughter of Glenn Proffitt, after Fleet Proffitt's house was moved from this site to the north side of Pleasant Valley Road (#162). The house is accessed by a paved driveway that enters the property southwest of the house. A stone retaining wall runs the entire length of the driveway, on its south side, and continues past the house to create a level building site. Resting on a brick foundation, the relatively plain, rectangular-plan house features a one-story cross-gable block at the west end and is sheathed with vinyl siding. A ceramic-tile front patio—a later addition—provides access to the recessed entrance bay and is sheltered by a flat, corrugated metal canopy supported on iron posts. Windows throughout are typically paired one-over-one replacement sash, with a prominent three-part picture window on the front (north) elevation. The asphalt-shingle roof is pierced by a plain, interior brick chimney. A wide shed dormer was added on the rear slope of the roof when the attic was partially finished for two bedrooms and a bathroom. The dormer contains two groups of three windows flanking a single window at the center. A one-bay, flat-roof carport supported by metal pipe columns is attached to the rear of the house.

The interior displays simple Colonial Revival-style moldings, door and window frames, and paneled wood doors. The living room fireplace is plain brick with a wood mantel shelf. The interior is typically finished with plaster walls and hardwood floors. The walls of the den are covered with pine paneling, and the kitchen and dining room, which are located in the block at the west end of the house, have been modernized.

Cellar, Proffitt House, ca. 1940.

NC-S

A stone cellar is located to the rear of the Proffitt House, set into the slope of the hill behind the house and flanked by a stone retaining wall. The cellar is constructed with uncoursed stone walls with a single-leaf solid wood door for access to the interior. The upper part of the cellar and shed roof looks as if it has been rebuilt and possibly raised at some point. The cellar walls appear to be capped by a thin slab of

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concrete and two courses of concrete block. A sloping frame structure sheathed with asbestos shingle siding and capped by an asphalt shingle roof sit on top of the concrete block.

Pauline Hensley House, 143 Pleasant Valley Road, ca. 1925.

C-B

The Pauline Hensley House on the south side of Pleasant Valley Road is an imposing one-and-one-half story, frame Craftsman style house set on a sloping site overlooking the valley below. A stone retaining wall borders the road, which passes the house to the north. A short driveway leads to a single-bay garage built beneath the house and accessed through an opening at the northwest corner of the house, in the tall stone foundation wall supporting the porch. The wood, fold-up garage door is paneled with two glass panes near the center. A single-leaf glazed-and-paneled door is located at the northeast corner, also entering beneath the porch. At the east end, stone steps with iron hand rails rise to porch level.

Resting on a stone foundation, the house features an asphalt-shingle side-gable roof with a broad shed dormer on the front, weatherboard siding, engaged wraparound porch, exposed rafter ends, and triangular purlin brackets in the gable ends and dormer. The porch is supported on square wood posts with a simple porch rail and square balusters. Single and paired two-over-two double-hung windows illuminate the interior. A gable-roof canopy supported on iron posts projects at the southeast corner of the house and is approached by a short set of stone steps. The shed dormer contains two groups of four two-light windows. The west and south (rear) elevations are relatively plain with single and paired windows and an exterior brick chimney flue rising against the rear wall of the house.

Mrs. Hensley was a well liked home economics teacher at Bald Creek School for many years.

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Statement of Significance

Summary

The Bald Creek Historic District encompasses the densely settled rural community associated with the Bald Creek School and located on Bald Creek in western Yancey County, North Carolina. The community's close association with a school, which dated to the late nineteenth century, and the organization and construction of a private high school by civic-minded citizens, directly affected the distinct development pattern of modest single-family dwellings and small farmsteads surrounding a cluster of public buildings. Unlike other rural communities in Yancey County, Bald Creek did not develop in relation to the railroad or the timber and mining industries, but instead attracted educated individuals and families to the area because of the school. In 1907, the original Bald Creek School became the first public high school in Yancey County. With education as a primary vocation and not dependent on agriculture, the Bald Creek community developed a more urban concentration of public and private buildings within its rural setting. The original school building was replaced in 1938 with an up-to-date educational facility with a gymnasium using Works Progress Administration funding. The Bald Creek Historic District meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A for its association with the improvement of public education in Yancey County. The Bald Creek Historic District also meets Criterion C for its collection of architecture from its period of growth and development beginning around 1900 and continuing through 1958. The district includes examples of a vernacular I-house, numerous Craftsman-influenced dwellings, the 1938 Rustic Revival-style stone school and gymnasium, and a prefabricated Ranch-style house. The period of significance for the district begins around 1900, with the construction of the C. W. Burton House, and continues through 1958; the years after 1958 do not meet Criteria Consideration G for exception significance.

Education in Yancey County and the Development of Bald Creek

Formed in 1833 from Buncombe and Burke counties, Yancey County was one of the earliest counties established in the western region of North Carolina. Yancey County's boundaries were altered throughout the mid-nineteenth century as several other counties were formed from land belonging to Yancey County. In 1872, when part of the county was annexed to Mitchell County, the present area of Yancey County was established. The Black Mountains, which stretch across the southern part of the county, are the highest in the eastern United States, but their steep terrain yields to fertile forests and farmland to the north as the ridges and streams fall toward the Toe River, which serves as the county's northern border. The South Toe River,

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Cane River, Jacks Creek, and Crabtree Creek flow through rich bottomland that has supported productive agriculture since the early nineteenth century.³

Burnsville, the county seat, occupies a central elevated site on the divide between the Cane River and the South Toe River. "Yellow Jacket" John Bailey conveyed one hundred acres for the county seat and the Town Square was laid out in 1834. Named in honor of Ottway Burns of Carteret County, a naval hero in the War of 1812, Burnsville stands near the geographical center of the county and continues to be the civic and economic center of community life. Burnsville is the only incorporated town in Yancey County.⁴

David Proffitt (1808-1892) of Ashe County received a land grant from the state and was one of the earliest settlers in the Bald Creek area. In 1826, he married Elizabeth Wilson, from a local family, and they established their home around Bald Creek, first a one-room log dwelling and then an eight-room log house erected in 1827. Proffitt was a farmer and stock drover, often traveling to South Carolina with his livestock. A fair and reputable man, Proffitt earned the nickname "Honest Dave" and served in the North Carolina General Assembly in 1868-1870. The Proffitt's raised eight children in Bald Creek. William (b. 1827), the eldest, also served in the state legislature in 1874-1876. A daughter Harriett (b. 1848) married Wilson Hensley in 1865 and lived nearby. By the mid-nineteenth century the Bald Creek community, located seven miles west of Burnsville, along the primitive road west from Burnsville to Ivy Gap, was well established. In 1849, the Laurel Turnpike Company was chartered to build a road from Tennessee to Ivy Gap, connecting with the existing road.⁵

The hardships of farm life in the nineteenth century, and later in the mineral mining and timbering industries, left little time for recreation outside of a family's immediate surroundings. Education, though not a necessity of nineteenth-century life, was actively sought by the citizens of Yancey County. Before the formation of a county-wide public school system in the 1840s, families sponsored subscription schools to advance beyond the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic, which were passed from parent to child. Held in available structures, subscription schools were taught by relatively well-educated members of the community. Teachers were paid per student, though rarely in cash. Patrons alternated providing room and board for instructors from outside the community. Subscription schools continued to exist long after Yancey County organized its first board of education.⁶

³ Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide To The Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 239; and Edgar F. Hunter Jr., "A History of Yancey Collegiate Institute," (Master's thesis, Appalachian State Teacher's College, 1952), 1-3.

⁴ Bishir, et al., 235; and Hunter 1952, 4-5.

⁵ Lloyd Richard Bailey Sr., *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley, Volume I*, 1994 (Durham, NC: Lloyd Richard Bailey, 1994), 377.

⁶ See Flora B. Roberson in Yancey History Association, *Images of Yancey: Pictorial History of a Western North Carolina County* (Burnsville, NC: Yancey History Association, 1993), 59-61. (Hereinafter cited as *Images of Yancey*)

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Religion also played a significant role in the daily lives of mountain families. Many of the settlers in Yancey County were of Scots-Irish descent and came from areas where the Presbyterian Church predominated. Despite the settlers' Presbyterian heritage, the Methodist and Baptist denominations became the most influential in the region. Of twenty-nine churches recorded in Yancey County in 1850, twenty were Baptist. Since denominational rivalry was keen throughout the area in the later nineteenth century, each of the three major sects—Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian—sought not only to combat moral decay and illiteracy, but also to extend their influence through private, church-sponsored schools.⁷

Despite the relative isolation of the county and many of its remote communities, the first board of education in Yancey County was formed in 1842. The board's primary duties were establishing school districts and approving payment of teachers. Before 1850 the public school session typically lasted six weeks and teachers were paid an average of sixteen dollars per month. The actual amount paid to teachers was based on the number of students taught, and the number of schools in session was based on the availability of teachers. The earliest public schools met in private homes or churches. In the mid-nineteenth century residents contributed directly to the construction of public school buildings in their communities. The use of public funds to construct schools in Yancey County apparently did not begin until the early twentieth century. The 1850 census showed that only 961 adults among the county's 7,809 residents could read or write. With a growing number of schools and longer school terms Yancey County families desired opportunities for secondary education in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁸

The Methodist Church established the first secondary school in the area—Burnsville Academy, which opened in 1852 under the direction of Steven G. Adams of Tennessee. The influence of the Methodist Church had spread throughout Yancey County under the leadership of James Anderson, one of the earliest Methodist preachers to settle in the region. The Methodist-sponsored high school closed during the Civil War, but it reopened and operated until the late 1890s. Many teachers in the county schools during the late nineteenth century were trained at Burnsville Academy.⁹

Yancey County's public education system continued to develop in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Increases in student enrollment paralleled the general population growth in the county. School sessions were lengthened to four months by 1890, and teacher salaries also increased as the school terms were extended. Facilities and equipment, however, continued to be fairly crude and financial resources were scarce. Interestingly though, Yancey County student enrollment may have peaked in 1885, when 4,128

⁷ Hunter 1952, 9-12.

⁸ Ed Hunter, "A History of Education In Yancey County" (Report, Yancey History Association, Burnsville, 1999), 4-6. Mr. Hunter was the superintendent of Yancey County Schools from 1971-1983.

⁹ Hunter 1952, 16-18; *Images of Yancey*, 63; and James Hutchins, *A Sketch of the Yancey Collegiate Institute, Burnsville, N.C.* (Burnsville, NC: Yancey Printing Company, n.d.), 8.

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students attended county schools. Only 2,494 students were enrolled in 1998 although the geographical area of the county remains unchanged.¹⁰

In the late 1870s, civic-minded citizens of Bald Creek organized to incorporate Yancey County High School. John W. Burton served as chairman, and he was joined by William Proffitt, Samuel Turner Proffitt, H. T. Proffitt, Wilson Hensley, and M. P. Hampton. The act, which was ratified by the General Assembly on March 5, 1879, authorized the group to maintain “a school on Bald Creek, Yancey County...for the period of ninety years.” Despite the early date of its charter, it was not until the 1890s that a building was constructed to house the school.¹¹

With the closing of Burnsville Academy in the 1890s, the county was left without a secondary school for nearly a decade. The residents of Bald Creek erected a two-story frame building in 1896 for a private high school. The imposing structure featured a tall clipped gable roof and four-story central tower and stood on the north side of the road to Burnsville. Thomas Ray gave the land for the school on the north side of the creek, and other families cut trees from their land for lumber. All materials and labor were donated by members of the community. A citizens group secured Mr. Elliott and Mr. Hart, both college graduates, as teachers. The two men taught at the school for two years. Following their departure, Oscar Sams was appointed principal, and was assisted by Miss Georgia Hampton.¹²

The Stanley McCormick School, sponsored by the Presbyterian Church, opened in 1899 in Burnsville, and quickly earned a reputation for its outstanding faculty. Even so, it closed in 1922, the result of the growing number of public high schools opening in Yancey County. The McCormick School was converted to a trade school under the name “Carolina New College” for a few years in the 1920s. Another private school, the Yancey Collegiate Institute (YCI), sponsored by the Baptist Church, opened its doors in 1901.¹³

The first public high school in Yancey County opened in the old private school building at Bald Creek in 1907, and by the 1920s five additional high schools had been constructed in the county. Burnsville High School met in the former YCI Administration Building beginning in 1926, after the Yancey Baptist Association closed the school and sold the property to the county Board of Education. The Great Depression stifled education progress until the superintendent of county schools, James Hutchins, informed the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of his concerns about the condition of the county’s five high schools.

¹⁰ Hunter 1999, 7-8.

¹¹ “An Act to Incorporate Yancey County High School” quoted in Bailey, *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley, Volume III, 2001* (Durham, NC: Lloyd Richard Bailey, 2001), 80.

¹² Hunter 1952, 19-20; and *Images of Yancey*, 60-63.

¹³ Several YCI buildings, including the Administration Building, remain standing in Burnsville and form the core of the Yancey Collegiate Institute Historic District (NR, 2003). Hunter 1952, 19-20; Hutchins, 8; and *Images of Yancey*, 63-64.

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Hutchins wrote: "I think it is generally conceded that we have the poorest school buildings in any county in the State." Hutchins also notified the state superintendent that an application for funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal relief programs, had been approved. Five new high schools—Bald Creek, Bee Log, Burnsville, Clearmont, and Micaville—were constructed between 1935 and 1939 of native stone. The new schools at Bald Creek, Bee Log, Clearmont, and Micaville replaced earlier wooden buildings in the same communities and were completed in 1938; the Burnsville school was still under construction in November 1939. The new Bald Creek school building was built on the community's ball field. The old frame structure was torn down after the new building was completed (a modern child care facility currently stands on the site of the old school). Four of the five buildings continue to serve as elementary schools while the fifth, Burnsville, houses the Board of Education offices. By 1940, nearly all of the one and two-teacher schools in the county were consolidated into one of these five schools, although a number of small schools remained open in the smaller rural communities. By 1950, the remaining one and two-teacher schools were closed and students enrolled in the consolidated schools with two exceptions—Lost Cove and Lincoln Park.¹⁴

Consolidation of Yancey County schools continued in the second half of the twentieth century. In 1958, students from the five high schools were consolidated into new schools at Cane River and East Yancey, each containing grades nine through twelve. Elementary grades were then moved into the WPA-era high school buildings at Bald Creek, Bee Log, Clearmont, and Micaville while elementary students in Burnsville attended classes in the former YCI Administration Building. In 1976, high school students began attending Mountain Heritage High School, currently the county's only high school, and Cane River and East Yancey became middle schools for grades six through eight. Elementary students in Burnsville continued to use the old YCI Administration Building, which is being rehabilitated for use as the county library, until a new Burnsville Elementary School was completed in 1991 and opened in 1992.¹⁵

Bald Creek differs from many of Yancey County's rural communities in that it did not develop in relation to the railroad or the timber and mining industries. The Bald Creek community remained primarily an agricultural area through most of the nineteenth century, with few other businesses listed along with nine farmers in Branson's business directories in the 1870s and 1880s. W. M. Wilson operated a corn and flour mill, Wilson Hensley ran a general store, and J. R. Neil oversaw a nursery business on his property on the north side of Bald Creek. One of the county's earliest post offices was located in Bald Creek, which was one of six listed in 1872. The farm families included Burton, Proffitt, Hensley, Wilson, Ray, Shepherd, and Whittington. Following the construction of the first Bald Creek school in 1896, the community began transforming from a typical rural agricultural area to a more settled community.¹⁶

¹⁴ Lloyd Richard Bailey Sr., ed. *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley, Volume II*, 1997 (Durham, NC: Lloyd Richard Bailey, 1997), 101. Hunter 1952, 92-97. Hunter 1999, 13-14. Otto Proffitt, personal communication, August 22, 2007.

¹⁵ Hunter 1999, 15; and *Images of Yancey*, 67.

¹⁶ *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory* (1872 and 1884).

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At the turn of the twentieth century, business listings for Bald Creek already reflected the changing character of the community, which had gained importance within the county through the opening of the school. Six Bald Creek residents were among the county's officers at the turn of the century, including Sheriff W. B. Wilson, surveyor J. R. Neill, Superintendent of Schools M. C. Honeycutt, Board of Education member E. E. Neill, and County Commissioner A. Z. Burton. Lafayette Whittington, from a family of Yancey County doctors, established himself as a physician in Bald Creek around 1902 and served until his death in 1916. The community was also served by D. R. Proffitt, a dentist; J. W. Tomberlin and W. B. Wilson, merchants; Frank Hensley, a lumber dealer; and a growing number of teachers, who worked at the school.¹⁷

Around 1915, Glenn Proffitt opened a general store, Proffitt Bros., situated on the old road from Burnsville. The original one-story frame building, which stood on the north side of the road to Burnsville, burned in 1948. The store then operated temporarily out of another building until a new brick store was completed around 1950. This store stood until the new highway was constructed in the late-twentieth century. Proffitt, who chaired the county Chamber of Commerce for a time, started overseeing the production of hooked rugs and chenille bedspreads during the Depression. Glenn Proffitt's son carried on his father's business and got involved in egg production, selling furs, and gathering roots and herbs, such as ginseng, for sale to drug manufacturers.¹⁸

Many of the houses built in Bald Creek during the 1920s and 30s were for families associated with the school or local businesses. These new residences were built relatively close together on small lots with garden plots. The community has remained relatively small through the twentieth century, with limited new construction since the 1950s and minimal loss of historic fabric. The construction of modern US 19 most substantially altered the character of the area, creating a significant physical and visual boundary on the north side of the district. In 1951, the congregation of Bald Creek United Methodist Church decided to replace its late-nineteenth century building with a new structure. The church received a \$5,000 grant from the Duke Endowment for skilled labor and building materials, but members of the congregation and community contributed the remaining labor, materials, and furnishings for the church, which was dedicated in 1955. The church parsonage, a prefabricated Ranch-style dwelling, was erected the following year. Around 1960, Harold Burton sold approximately forty acres of agricultural land to the west of the Burton House, and a gas station and convenience store was built on a portion of the land, on the south side of the highway, in the early 1960s. A child care facility on the east side of Pleasant Valley Road opposite the church is another late-twentieth century addition to the community.¹⁹

¹⁷ *North Carolina Yearbook* (1902-1915 editions).

¹⁸ *Images of Yancey*, 42, 52; Sarah Proffitt, personal communication, July 23, 2007; and Bill Sharpe, *A New Geography of North Carolina*. Vol. III (Raleigh, NC: Sharpe Publishing Company, 1961), 1651.

¹⁹ Danah Burton Tipton, personal communication, August 22, 2007.

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Architectural Context

Set within a predominately rural landscape, the Bald Creek Historic District represents an unusual, almost urban concentration of buildings and structures that did not develop in relation to the railroad or the timber and mining industries, which influenced the growth of other Yancey County communities. Bald Creek was served by an important nineteenth-century road linking the county seat of Burnsville to towns in neighboring Madison County to the west, but the community's primary vocation has been education since the early twentieth century. The development of Bald Creek began in the 1890s with the establishment of a private high school, which, along with its successor schools, provided a focal point for the community and attracted individuals and families to Bald Creek for whom education was a primary occupation—teachers, principals, and students. This concentration of people not dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood allowed the community to attain a distinct physical appearance, with small single-family residences built close together around the public buildings—the school and gymnasium, church, fire department, post office, and stores. The Bald Creek School and Gymnasium, built by the WPA in 1938, and the ca. 1900 C. W. Burton House are among important individual buildings within the district, which also contains good examples of bungalows and Craftsman-influenced dwellings, associated outbuildings, the ca. 1955 Bald Creek United Methodist Church, and the church parsonage, a prefabricated Ranch-style dwelling. Of the primary resources within the district, a few houses have been altered with additions, vinyl siding, and other modernization.

The Bald Creek community, while bearing some similarity to the rural valleys that have supported a productive agricultural landscape, offers a greater concentration and diversity of architecture than its counterparts. From the mid-nineteenth century until the construction of better roads and rail lines into the county, Yancey County remained largely isolated by its natural borders. Its residents lived a pioneer lifestyle in modest homes constructed of log or heavy timber framing. As better transportation routes allowed for an influx of new economic and social ideas, so did new architectural fashions and building materials also begin to appear in the county. In the period from 1870 through 1920, two-story, three-bay, single-pile frame houses, commonly known as "I"-houses, emerged as the dominant residential form in Yancey County and throughout the region. The basic form, which frequently featured weatherboard siding, a center hall plan, attached porch, and rear kitchen ell, could be easily enlarged as families grew and adapted to reflect popular architectural decoration of the time.

The ca. 1900 C. W. Burton House stands to the west of the school and is located at the end of a tree-lined gravel drive. A basic vernacular I-house form, the two-story, three-bay, central hall plan frame house has been altered in recent years with the addition of vinyl siding, replacement windows, and replacement porch elements. The house, however, retains its basic form and the interior contains many of its original details and materials: wide beaded boards cover most of the first-story walls and ceilings; an open-string stair with a chamfered newel in the center hall, and plain post and lintel mantels in the main rooms. After Burton

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married for the second time, he built the adjacent one and one-half story Craftsman-influenced house—Burton-Howell House—to the east. Set back on a deep lot, the hip-roof frame dwelling rests on a stone foundation and features a center hip roof dormer, wraparound porch supported by square posts on stone piers, and exposed rafter ends. Part of the porch appears to have been enclosed in the 1950s or 1960s and a two-car garage has been constructed to the west of the house.

Most of the remaining houses in the Bald Creek Historic District are small bungalows and Craftsman-influenced dwellings reflecting a period of early twentieth-century development as non-farm families established themselves in the community. In the early twentieth century the Craftsman style grew from the influence of Gustav Stickley's *The Craftsman* magazine (1910-1916), itself an outgrowth of the Arts and Crafts movement that spread from England to the United States in the late nineteenth century. Through his magazine Stickley became the chief disseminator of Arts and Crafts beliefs in the United States, and his company, Craftsman Workshops, produced furniture that promoted design unity of both house and furnishings. He published house designs—complete working drawings and specifications—in *The Craftsman* that could be ordered from the company. Craftsman houses, as they came to be known, represented the Arts and Crafts ideals of vernacular revival, honest expression of structure, responsiveness to site, and the use of local materials for comfortable domestic architecture that provided “the proper atmosphere for the pursuit of the simple life.”²⁰

A number of Bald Creek houses incorporate many of the elements promoted by Stickley and other proponents of “the Craftsman idea,” which asserted that creating a comfortable and secure home environment was the natural antithesis of the commercial and industrial expansion that was perceived by many early twentieth-century reformers to be corrupting the nation and its citizens. Therefore, efforts to simplify the home—a direct response to the Queen Anne and late Victorian styles of the nineteenth century—were concentrated on removing applied ornament from house designs. Stickley and others argued that the beauty inherent in fine craftsmanship and natural materials was sufficient decoration in itself; decoration that emphasized “the fundamental principles of honesty, simplicity and usefulness....” The typical Craftsman elements included a dominant roofline to define the scale of the house, augmented by deep eaves, multiple gables or dormers, eave brackets, exposed rafter ends, porches with bold porch posts, large windows, and convenient open floor plans. In residential architecture, the Craftsman style often employed wood or shingle siding (frequently in combination), unenclosed eave overhangs with exposed roof rafters, decorative beams or braces in gable ends, and square or tapered porch posts supported by piers extending from above the porch floor to ground level without a break. Doors and windows also typically contained a distinctive glazing pattern with multi-pane areas across the top or multiple lights over a single pane in double hung sash.

The Glenn Proffitt House, a two-story, gambrel-roof, frame dwelling built around 1920, is probably the largest of these. The house incorporates both Colonial Revival and Craftsman elements and is covered

²⁰ Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, World of Art Series (New York: Thames and Hudson Inc, 1991), 107, 122-124, 141-142.

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with weatherboards on the first story and shingles on the gambrel ends, including the front-facing cross gable. An attached shed roof porch extends across the façade and is supported on square posts. The solid porch rail is also covered with wood shingles. A one-story gable-roof ell extends to the rear, with a shed roof addition constructed of stone projecting from the south side of the ell. Also associated with this house is a detached, front-gable roof garage constructed of stone with German siding in the gables, exposed rafter ends, and a metal roof. The Pauline Hensley House on the south side of Pleasant Valley Road is an imposing one and one-half story, frame Craftsman-style house featuring a side-gable roof with large shed dormers, exposed stone basement, wraparound engaged porch on square posts, exposed rafter ends, and triangular brackets in the gable ends. The modest Proffitt family houses on Pleasant Valley Road also incorporate elements of the Craftsman style with their prominent front-gable porches, wood and shingle siding, unenclosed eaves, and convenient open floor plans.

The Bald Creek School and Gymnasium are good examples of WPA-era Rustic Revival-style construction using native stone found in western North Carolina. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was one of a number of relief agencies formed under President Roosevelt's New Deal program of the 1930s that put the nation's labor force back to work on public projects during the Depression. In addition to the WPA, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had a strong presence in western North Carolina. The CCC trained unemployed young men in various skills and worked extensively building roads, bridges, and recreational facilities through the region. The natural and rustic style of CCC construction and engineering work reflected a national style developed from the National Park Service's design standards for national parks, which emphasized a close harmony of built structures and natural environment. The style was manifest in low, horizontal buildings constructed using native stone or rock, massive logs, and heavy timbers. The WPA also adopted a similar rustic style for the numerous civic buildings—schools, post offices, libraries—erected under the auspices of the agency, although traces of the Craftsman or Colonial Revival style helps to differentiate these structures and their important public functions.²¹

Completed in 1938, the Bald Creek School and Gymnasium represent one of five schools built by the WPA in Yancey County during the administration of school superintendent James Hutchins. All five buildings survive and only the Burnsville High School, which now serves as the Board of Education offices, is no longer used as a school. The E-shaped Bald Creek School features a long symmetrical façade oriented north with three projecting entrance pavilions. The original auditorium, which composed the rear center wing of the building, was removed in the 1990s and replaced with a kindergarten wing erected in 2000. The freestanding stone gymnasium, located to the northeast of the school, is a two-story rectangular structure with windows grouped in the upper part of the wall, metal roof, and a one-story shed roof block on the west side. The native stone construction is typical of the WPA schools in Yancey and other western North Carolina counties, and helps convey a sense of importance to the function contained therein.

²¹ Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 73-8.

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Geographical Data

UTMs

Zone 17

E E371420 N3975030

Verbal Boundary Description

Bald Creek Historic District is generally bounded by Bald Creek on the north, Pleasant Valley Road and property lines on the east, and property lines and tree lines on the south and west. The district boundary is shown by a heavy black line on the attached Yancey County tax map at a scale of 184 feet to one inch. The nominated boundary includes approximately 16.75 acres.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundary for the Bald Creek Historic District includes all of the resources in Bald Creek associated with the development of the community from the late-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The boundaries were drawn to exclude buildings less than fifty years of age standing on the east side of Pleasant Valley Road, agricultural and unproductive forest lands to the west and south, and property north of US 19. Although many of Bald Creek's historic businesses stood on the north side of the present-day highway, none of these resources remain and improvements to US 19 in the second half of the twentieth century have created a strong visual and physical separation between the developed community and the area north of the highway. The nominated boundary encompasses the important surviving public buildings in the Bald Creek community, as well as the group of modest houses built by the non-farm families that settled around the public and commercial buildings.

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Photograph Index

All photographs of the Bald Creek Historic District in the Bald Creek community of Yancey County, North Carolina, were taken by Clay Griffith of Acme Preservation Services on August 7 and 22, 2007. Digital images kept at the Survey and Planning Branch of North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh, North Carolina.

1. Bald Creek Elementary School – oblique front view looking southwest
2. Gymnasium, Bald Creek Elementary School – south elevation, looking north
3. C. W. Burton House – façade, looking south
4. Burton-Howell House – façade, looking south
5. Bald Creek Fire Department (non-contributing building) – oblique front view looking northeast
6. Bald Creek Methodist Church – oblique view looking northwest
7. Willard Hensley House – façade, looking west
8. Fleet Proffitt House – façade, looking north
9. Glenn Proffitt House – façade, looking west
10. Pauline Hensley House – oblique front view looking southwest
11. Streetscape – looking east along Pleasant Valley Road